



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

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For Information Contact Public Affairs
WYN HORNBUCKLE
Telephone: (602) 514-7625
Cell: (602) 525-2681

CYCLISTS PLEAD GUILTY TO ILLEGALLY BICYCLING ON GRAND CANYON HIKING TRAILS

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. – Sean Monterastelli, 23, David Yost, 24, and Jacob Thompson, 24, pleaded guilty last week and were sentenced to 48 hours in jail, 5 years probation, during which they are banned from National Parks in the United States, and a payment of \$500 each to the Grand Canyon Search and Rescue Fund by U.S. Magistrate Judge Mark E. Aspey. All three pleaded guilty on February 23 to conspiracy to illegally bike and camp inside the Grand Canyon, camping inside the Grand Canyon below the rim without a backcountry permit and illegally bicycling on the trails below the rim of Grand Canyon. A conviction for these offenses carries a maximum penalty of six months in jail, a \$5,000.00 fine or both.

“Bicycle use is prohibited on inner canyon trails,” stated Chris Pergiel, Grand Canyon Chief Ranger. “With cliffs plunging hundreds of feet alongside the trail, these cyclists created a safety risk for themselves as well as others on the trail. We have a responsibility to enforce the law and protect both park resources and visitors to Grand Canyon National Park. Those that violate the law and put others at risk will be prosecuted.”

Monterastelli, Yost and Thompson committed their offenses while on a multi-year bicycling trip from Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, to the tip of South America. The trio decided to route through the Grand Canyon via the Arizona Trail and intentionally made the trip illegally during the end of January, 2007, by bicycling into the Grand Canyon and camping illegally on the North Kaibab trail. The group posted photographs, videotape and a diary entry about their illegal trip on their website.

Cyclists may legally cross the Grand Canyon section of the Arizona Trail by obtaining backcountry permits for their camping and either carrying their bikes (referred to as “hike a bike”) across the canyon or having their bikes transported by shuttle around the canyon. As additional terms of probation, the description, photographs and videotape of the illegal activity have been removed from the groups website and any other form of media.

The investigation in this case was conducted by National Park Service Rangers at Grand Canyon National Park. The prosecution was handled by Camille D. Bibles, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Flagstaff.

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